

# Special Event Permitting Reform

**Fire District's Association Meeting**  
**October 28, 2021**



# Project Goals



- Make events in the public right-of-way safer;
- Improve community event calendar so event planners can minimize conflicts;
- Making events more sustainable with waste diversion requirements; and
- Enhance intergovernmental communication and collaboration.

# Background: Special Events in Sonoma County

- From 2016-2019, annual event averages were:
  - 55 events in the right-of-way
  - 108 special events on private property through the Fire Marshal
  - 7 athletic events of 2,500 or more participants

# Making Events in the Public Right-of-Way Safer

- The current Special Events Ordinance has an exemption for bicycling events, no matter the size, that obey the California Vehicle Code (CVC)
- Unpermitted events prevent collaboration with law enforcement and first responders to protect public safety.

# Making Events in the Public Right-of-Way Safer

- Potential ordinance revisions that Permit Sonoma could explore include:
  - Requiring permits for any event that has a timed component or awards a winner;
  - Applying the current 50-person limit for other events to cycling;
  - Requiring that all events that participants pay for are permitted; or
  - Some combination of these restrictions.

# Improve Community Event Calendar to Minimize Conflicts

- The Special Event Calendar provides a centralized repository for special events
- Permitting a greater percentage of events makes the calendar more effective

# Improve Community Event Calendar to Minimize Conflicts

- Currently event promoters can apply for a permit one year in advance
- Allowing event promoters to reserve dates up to five years in advance helps plan accordingly
- Permit Sonoma will work with permitting partners to create processes that minimize repetitive work while ensuring essential safety precautions.

# Enhance Intergovernmental Communication and Collaboration

- Currently, permittees and staff must coordinate separately with multiple departments.
- Permit Sonoma will consider implementing a multi-department and agency standing committee to hear all special event permits.



# Enhance Intergovernmental Communication and Collaboration

- Other jurisdictions like San Francisco and Seattle reported that the centralized committee improved communications.
- 100% of permittees survey respondents said that such a committee would either be helpful or very helpful.

# Next Steps

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- Community Engagement – Q4 2021
- Identify Accompanying Internal Process Improvements – Q4 2021
- Draft Ordinance – Q1 2022
- Planning Commission – Q1 2022
- Board of Supervisors – Q2 2022

# Questions?

